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Downtown Crossing Street Improvements

A better way to bring Boston together

September 22, 2021

The meeting will begin shortly!

*This meeting is being recorded. The recording will be posted on the project website:
<https://www.boston.gov/downtown-crossing-street-improvements>*

Mayor Kim Janey

USING THE ZOOM CONTROL PANEL

This presentation is available in English, Cantonese and Mandarin. To select your desired language, please click the Interpretation button at the bottom of your screen

使用控制面板 ZOOM

如果您想听普通话请举手或发送聊天

要只听普通话, 请单击“静音原始音频”

使用控制面板 ZOOM

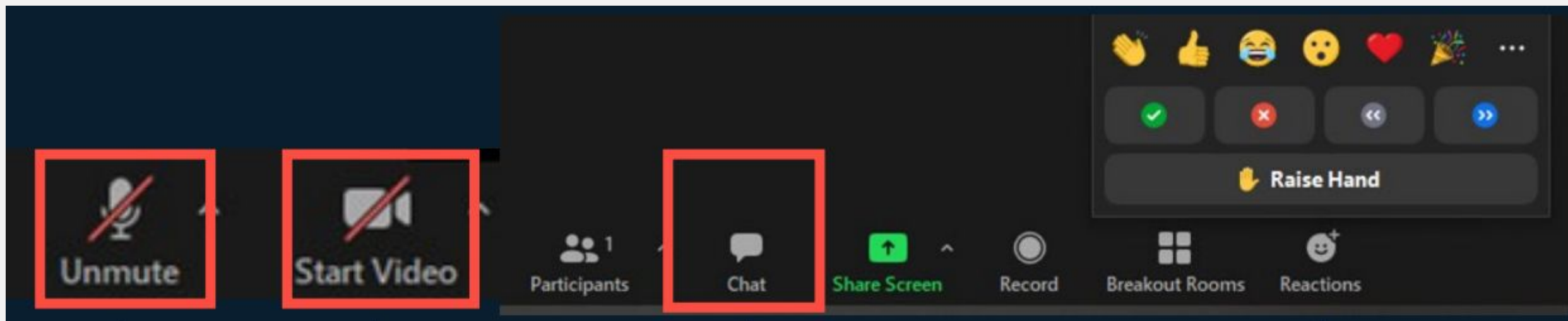
如果你想听粵語請舉手或發送聊天

要僅聽粵語, 請單擊“静音原始音频”



普通话
对于粤语

USING THE ZOOM CONTROL PANEL



Mute/Unmute

沉默的 / 取消静音

沉默的 / 取消静音



Camera On/Off

相机 在 / 离开

相機 在 / 離開



Chat Box

聊天框

聊天框



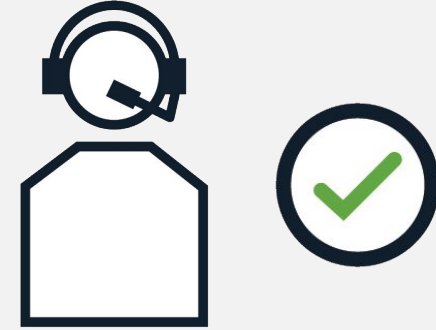
Raise Hand

举手

舉手

PARTICIPATING IN A ZOOM MEETING

- *We will begin with a short presentation*
- *There will be time for questions after the presentation*
- *There will be interactive questions during the presentation*
- *You can post a question in the chat box OR you can raise your 'digital hand' and your microphone will be unmuted*
- *The presentation will be recorded and posted on the project webpage:*
<https://www.boston.gov/downtown-crossing-street-improvements>
- **Thank you for joining us!**



TODAY'S AGENDA



SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

6:00 PM

PRESENTATION

- Project Introduction
- Anticipated Schedule
- Themes:
 - Access & Mobility
 - Activation
 - Environment
 - Precedents
 - New Possibilities

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

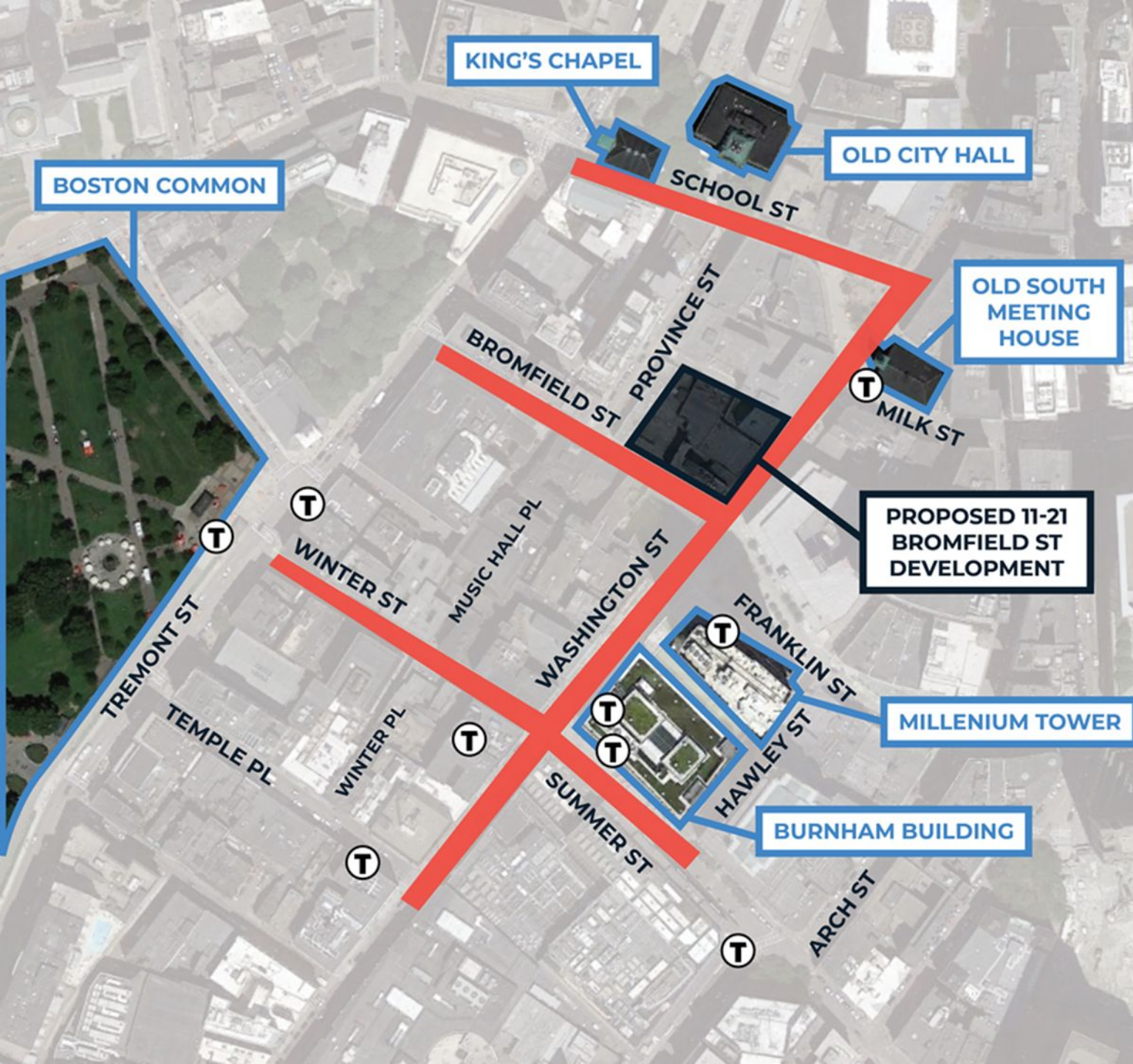


OUR PURPOSE

- Bring streets into a state of good repair and...
- Amplify and build on what makes Downtown Crossing great!
- Ensure an inclusive, active, and economically-vibrant area for decades to come
- Support goals of Go Boston 2030 and Vision Zero



PROJECT SCOPE



- Washington Street
 - Temple Place to School Street
- Bromfield Street
- School Street
- Summer Street
 - Washington Street to Hawley Street
- Winter Street

OUR TEAM

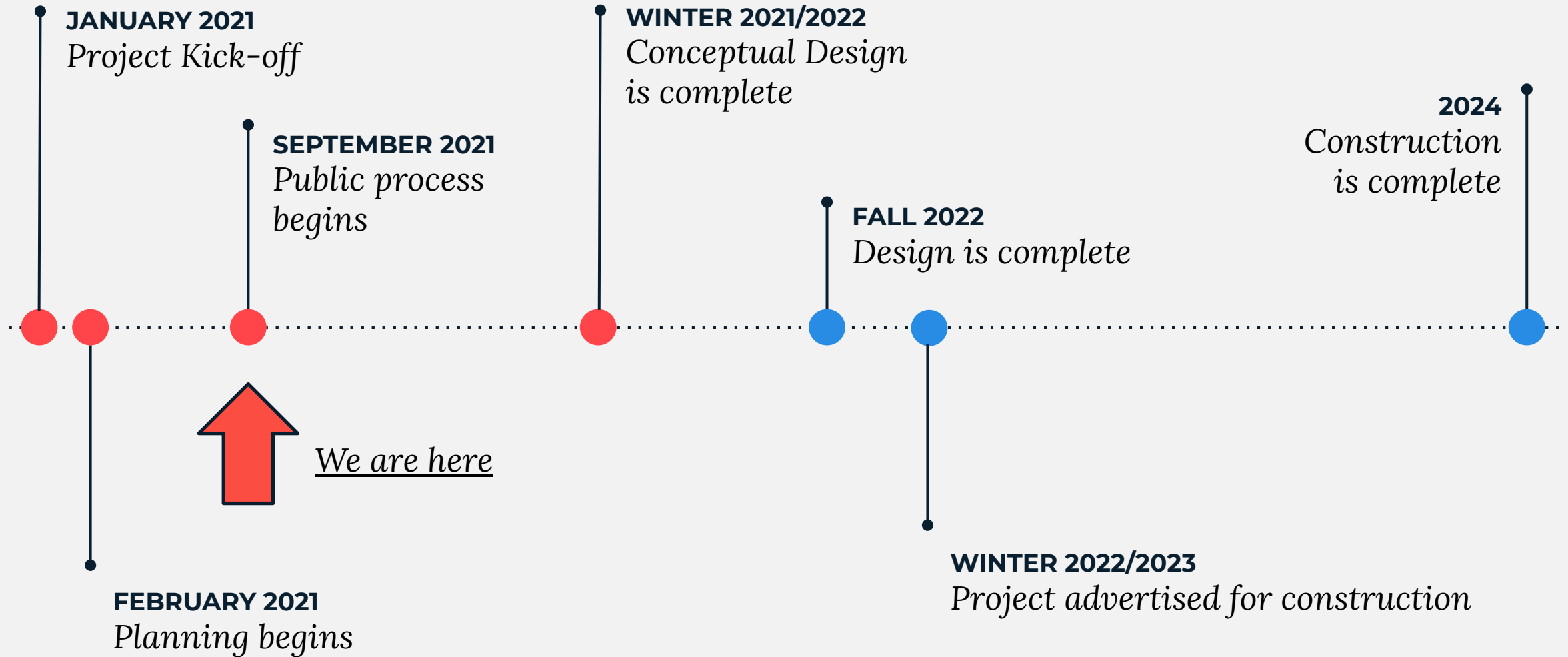
- Project managed jointly by
BTD/PWD



- Consultant team:
 - HDR
 - Toole Design Group
 - Sasaki
 - Buia Engineering
 - Bryant Associates



ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE *



* Schedule is anticipated and is subject to change *

** Project is funded through conceptual design phase **

Design – 18 Months

Construction – 24 Months

TODAY'S GOALS

- Introduce the project scope and goals
- Solicit input from those who live, work, shop, and pass through Downtown Crossing





Introduction LivePoll Questions:

1. Where do you live?
 - Downtown Crossing
 - Other area of Downtown
 - Other neighborhood of Boston
 - Suburbs / Outside of Boston
2. What brings you to Downtown Crossing?
 - Work / School
 - Shopping
 - Home
 - Events / Theater
 - Other
3. Using one word, how would you describe Downtown Crossing today?
 - *Respond via chat*



ACCESS & MOBILITY:

How we move through the space and accommodate access, service and public safety



ACTIVATION:

How we use and enjoy the space



ENVIRONMENT:

How we accommodate existing site constraints



PRECEDENTS:

How we incorporate great ideas from around the globe



NEW POSSIBILITIES:

Where we go from here



ACCESS & MOBILITY

Downtown Crossing is a nexus of mobility in Boston, itself known as the “Hub of the Universe”

ACCESS & MOBILITY

Walking

- *On an average weekday* more than 50,000 people walk through Downtown Crossing to board the T*
- *At peak hour, nearly 5,000* people walk on each block of the study area*

Biking

- *Adjacent bike network expansion is in high gear, providing connectivity for all ages and abilities to and around Downtown Crossing*

* pre-COVID



SURFACE CONDITIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY



- Existing sidewalks are narrow, in a challenging state of repair, and often not compliant with ADA regulations



ACCESS & MOBILITY

Vehicular access

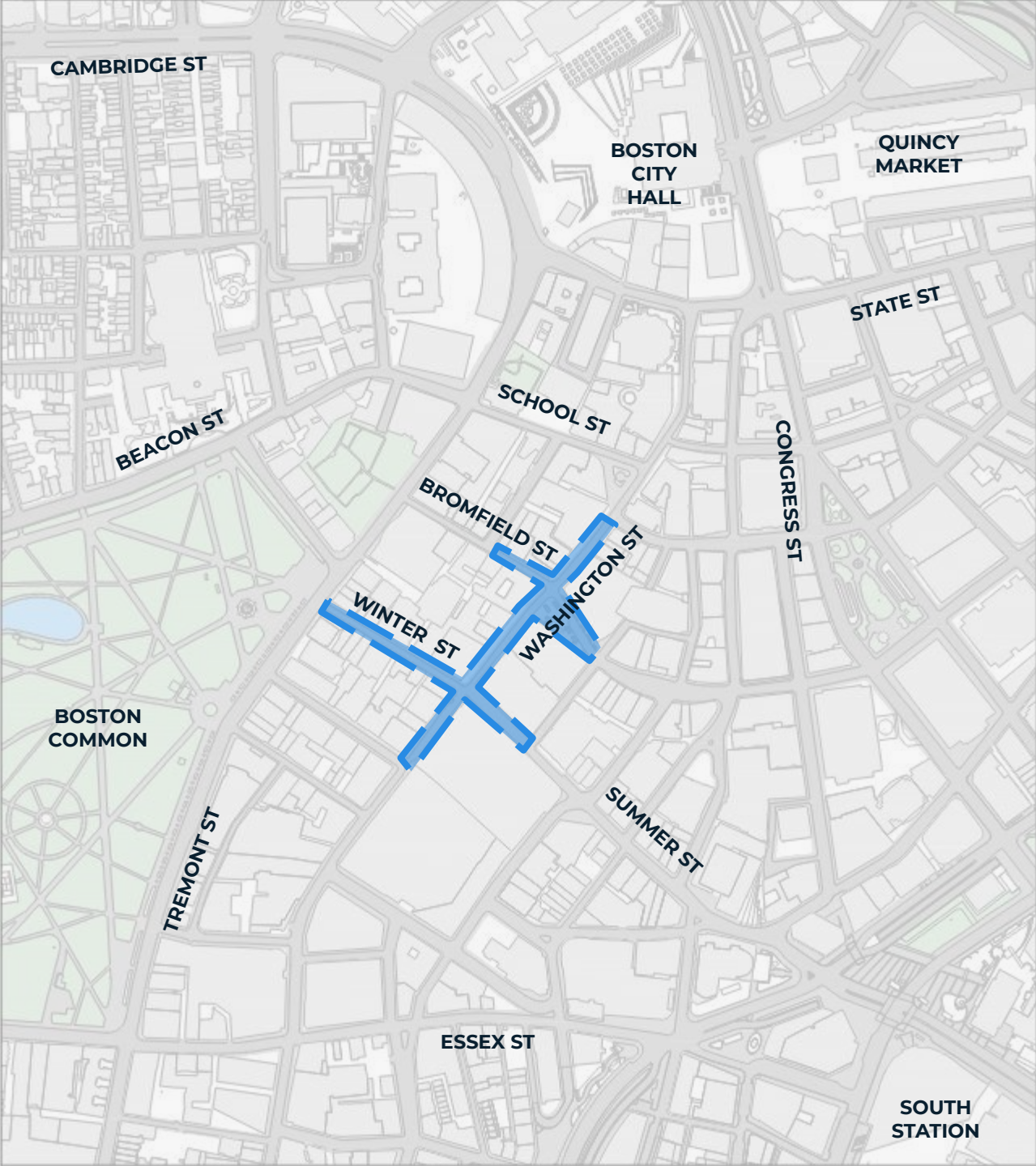
- Most of the study area is a pedestrian zone in which private vehicles are prohibited.
 - Taxis are permitted from 6pm-2am
 - Commercial vehicles are permitted from 6pm-11am
 - Public vehicles and others with special permits may enter the pedestrian zone at any time
- Curbside space around the study area is primarily dedicated to commercial vehicles only



SCHOOL STREET

- Only eastbound route for vehicles to cross Washington Street between Essex and Sudbury Streets
- Only vehicle access to Province and Bromfield Streets
- Pedestrians outnumber vehicles nearly four to one
- Vehicles and pedestrians compete for limited space in this historic area



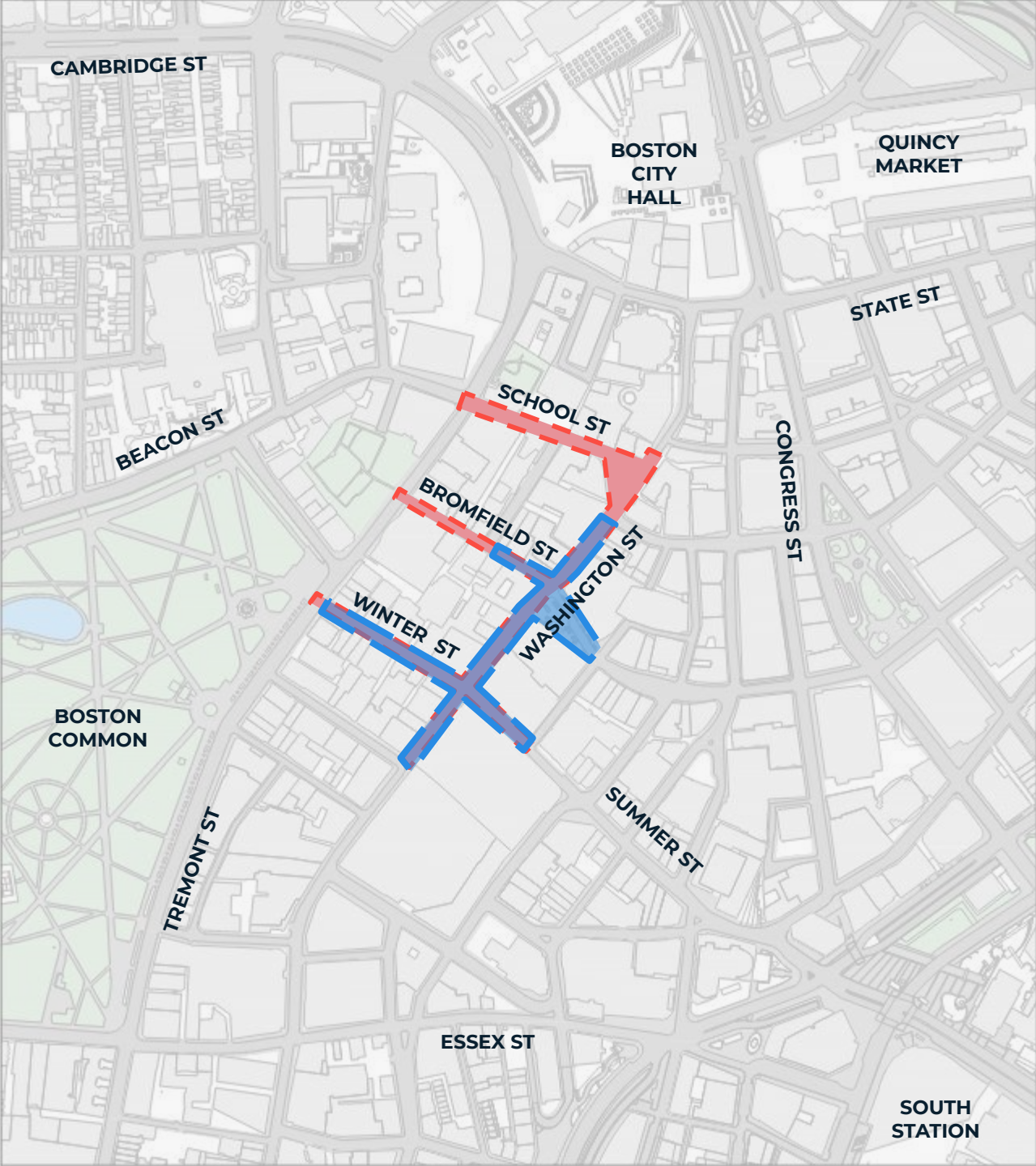


PEDESTRIAN ZONE CONTEXT



Existing Pedestrian Zone

PEDESTRIAN ZONE CONTEXT

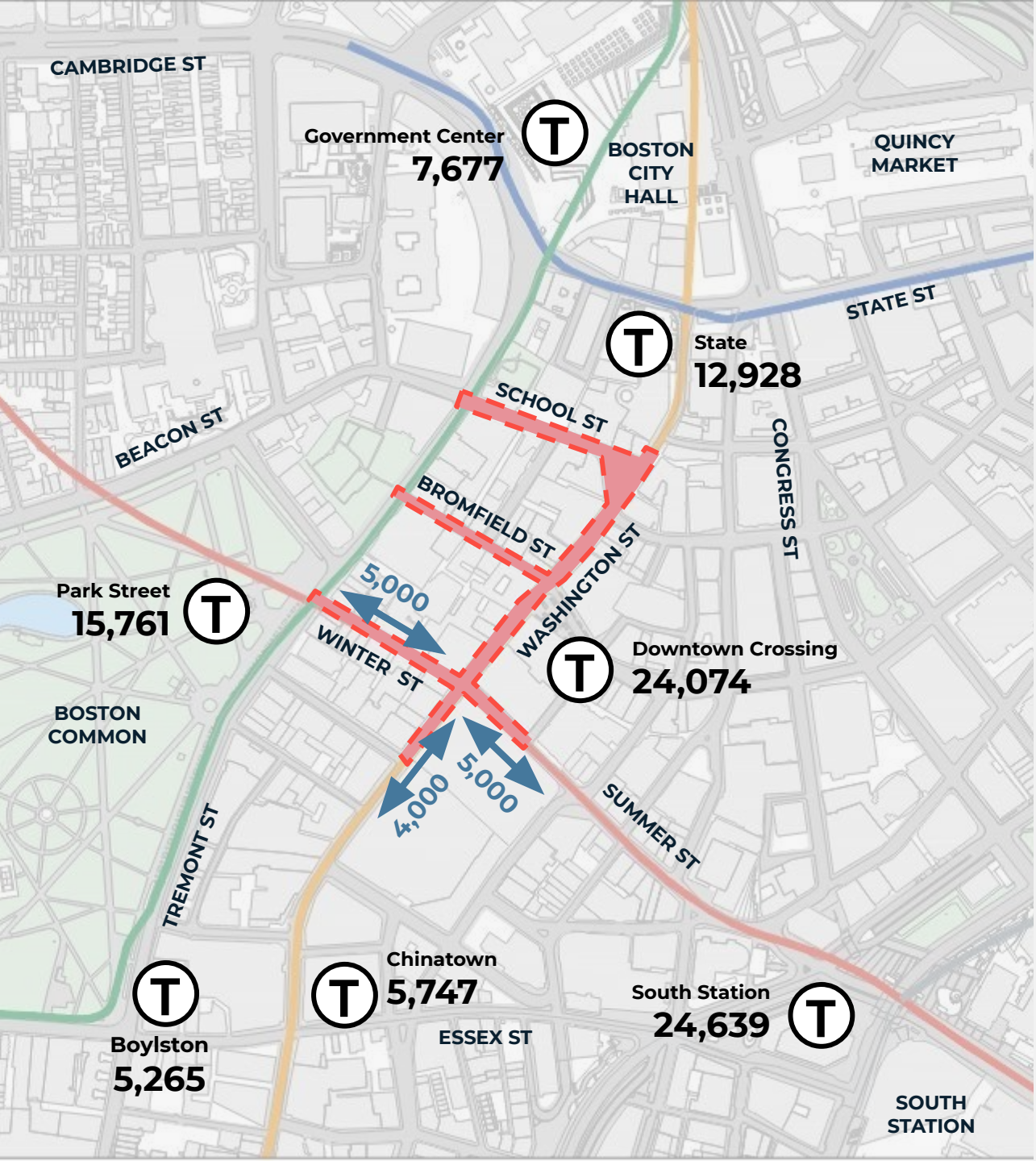


Project Limits



Existing Pedestrian Zone

WALKING/TRANSIT CONTEXT



Project Limits



Boylston
5,265

MBTA Station with
Weekday Boardings



5,000

Peak Hour Pedestrian Volumes
(pre-COVID)

BIKING CONTEXT



Project Limits



High-Comfort Bicycle Network



Blue Bikes Station

MANAGING CONFLICTS

- Reinforce that pedestrians come first
- Accommodate northbound bikes along Washington Street
- Allow nearby space for rideshare
- Ensure that all modes coexist!



LOADING CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES



- Reinforce pedestrians as a priority
- Designated loading areas
- Time-of-day restrictions
- Deliveries often occur outside of 6 PM – 11 AM window
- Deliveries conflict with pedestrians and force them to sidewalks and off the street



ACCESS CONTROL

- No existing barriers prevent unauthorized entry into the pedestrian zone
- Some form of barriers may be considered
- Need to provide easy access for emergency services



Access & Mobility LivePoll Questions:



1. What mode of transportation do you use to get to Downtown Crossing?
 - Walking
 - Bike / Scooter
 - Public transit
 - Taxi / Rideshare
 - Personal vehicle

2. What are the biggest mobility needs at Downtown Crossing?
 - Wider sidewalks
 - Better loading management
 - Better access control for unauthorized vehicles
 - More bike racks and bike amenities
 - More bike share
 - Other

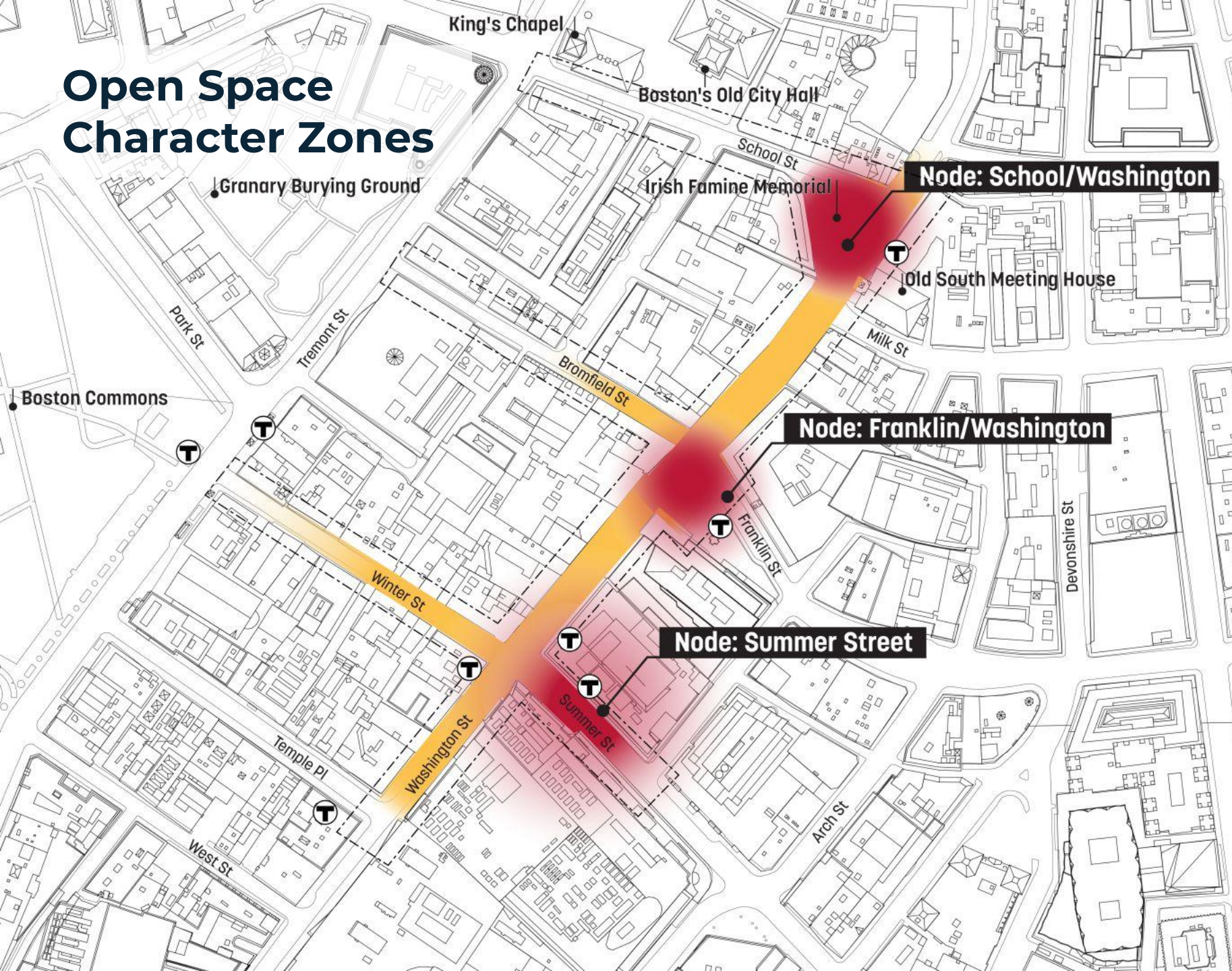
3. What would you propose to improve the functionality of Downtown Crossing?
 - *Respond via chat*



ACTIVATION

Downtown Crossing has long been an active and vibrant center of commerce in the heart of Boston

Open Space Character Zones



Character Zones



Nodes



Pedestrian Street

"...Downtown Crossing Pedestrian Zone is a very popular place to meet up, to people watch, and to sit. Summer Street is by far the most popular place to do all three, but each section has its own character."

Public Life Study
Howard Stein Hudson, Summer 2016

Character Zones: Washington Street

People feel **UNSAFE** stopping in the center of Washington Street. But Summer and Winter Streets feel safe in the center. *

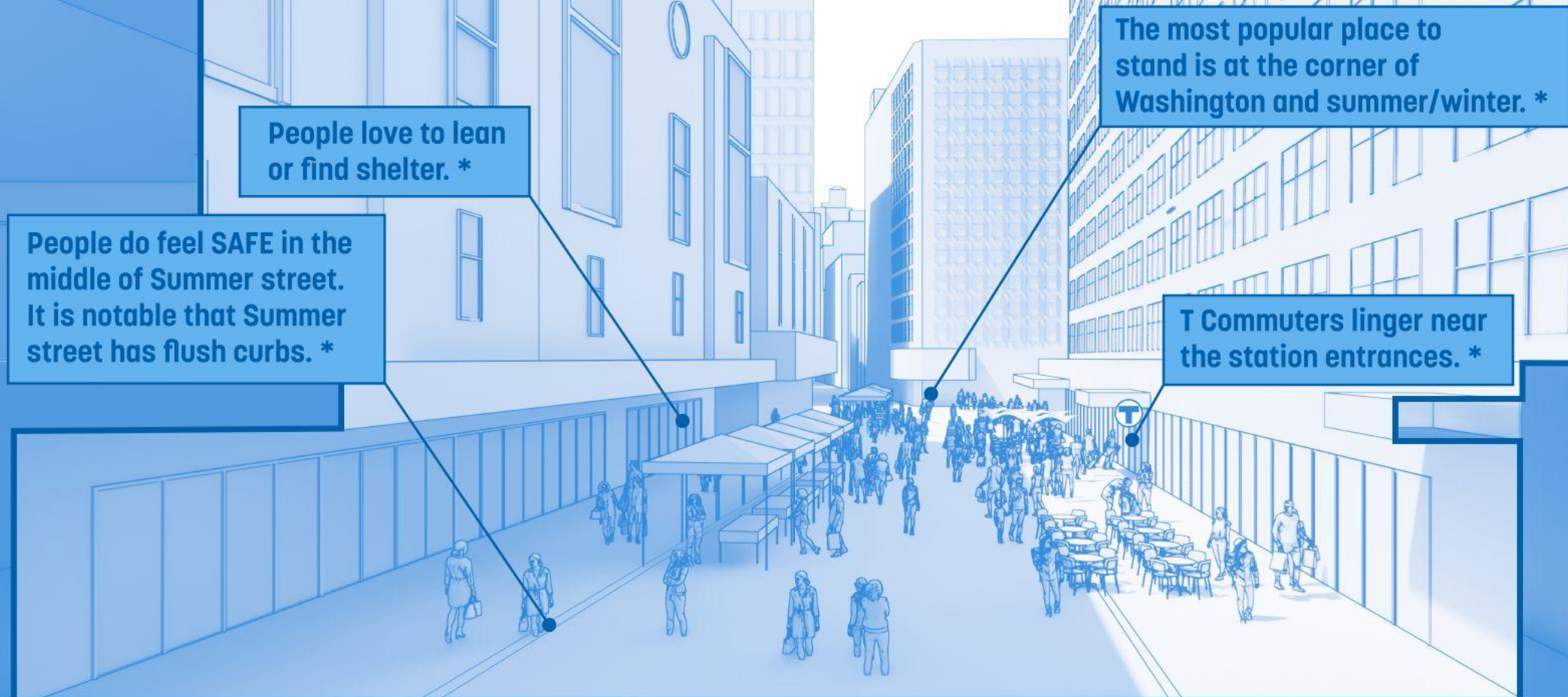
BID info and wayfinding kiosks are **POPULAR**. *

84-90'



* Public Life Study
Howard Stein Hudson, Summer 2016

Character Zones: Summer Street



72'

* Public Life Study
Howard Stein Hudson, Summer 2016

Character Zones: Franklin/Washington Street

The image is a blue-tinted architectural rendering of a city street scene. It features a wide pedestrian walkway with many people walking, several trees, and a set of stairs leading up to a building. Two callout boxes with blue backgrounds and white text are present. The first callout, on the left, points to a group of people standing near a tree and says "People-watching is in high demand. *". The second callout, on the right, points to a storefront window and says "Some window displays are more engaging than others. *". In the top right corner, there is an inset map showing a street grid with a red dot and the label "Node: Franklin/Washington".

People-watching is in high demand. *

Some window displays are more engaging than others. *

Node: Franklin/Washington

* Public Life Study
Howard Stein Hudson, Summer 2016



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Some window displays are more engaging than others. *

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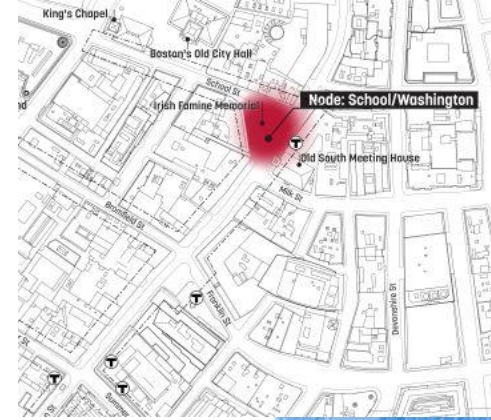
People-watching is in high demand. *

Some window displays are more engaging than others. *

Node: Franklin/Washington

* Public Life Study
Howard Stein Hudson, Summer 2016

Character Zones: School/Washington Street



Semi-enclosed areas provide popular space for conversations *

People prefer seating that is protected from the back *

* Public Life Study
Howard Stein Hudson, Summer 2016

Daily Use Activities

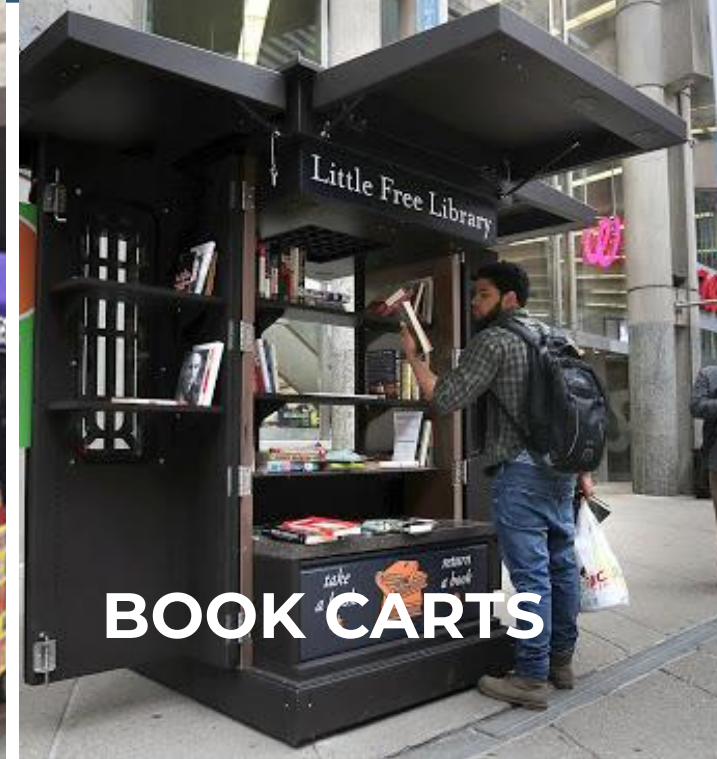
CAFÉ SEATING



FOOD CARTS



BOOK CARTS



PEOPLE WATCHING



DISPLAY



PERFORMANCE





Activation LivePoll Questions:

1. What events currently bring you to Downtown Crossing?
 - Work
 - Commuting
 - Entertainment
 - Shopping
 - Other

2. What amenities would help activate Downtown Crossing?
 - Additional seating
 - Additional lighting/pedestrian scale lighting
 - Electrical connections for public use
 - Additional greenery

3. How do you want Downtown Crossing to feel?
 - *Respond via chat*

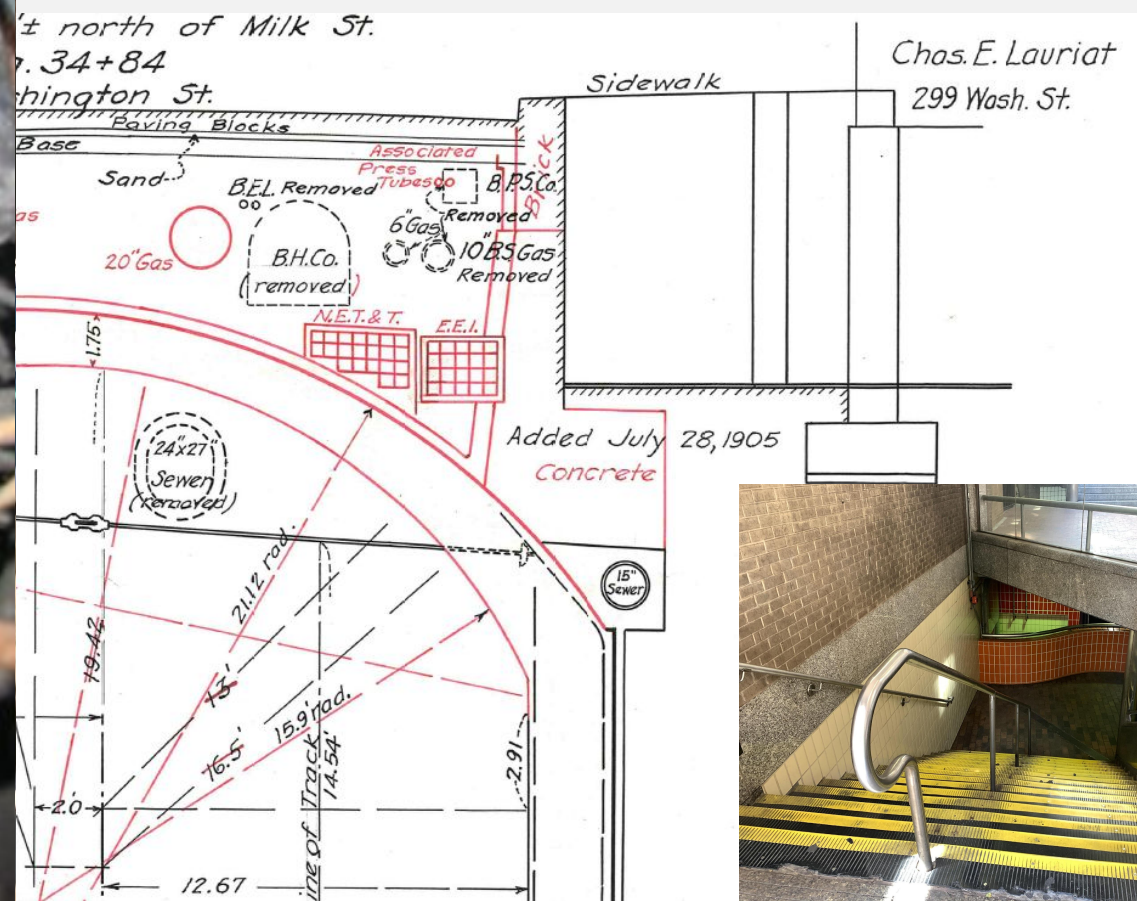


ENVIRONMENT

Nearly 400 years in the making, Downtown Crossing has many existing constraints which will require creative solutions

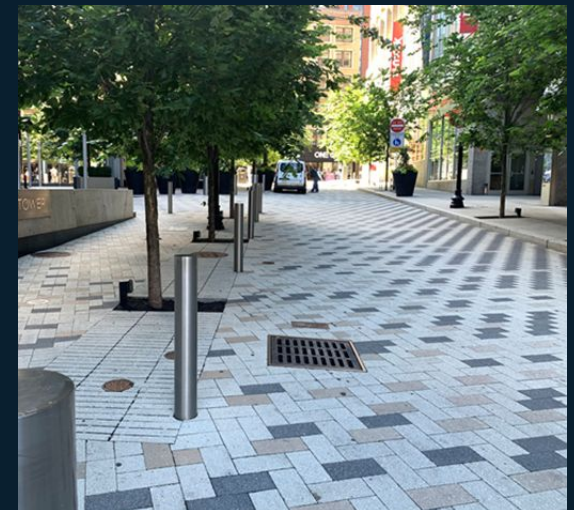
UNDERGROUND CONFLICTS

- MBTA Red/Orange Line Tunnels, including Winter Street Concourse
- Existing utilities
- Existing areaways/hollow sidewalks



RESILIENCY

- Explore Green Infrastructure
 - Trees
 - Plantings
 - Stormwater management
- Understand limitations due to existing site constraints





Environment LivePoll Questions:

1. What character would you like Downtown Crossing to have?
 - Historic
 - Modern
 - Green/soft
 - Paved/hardscape
2. What are the defining features of this district that should be preserved and/or enhanced?
 - **Respond via chat**

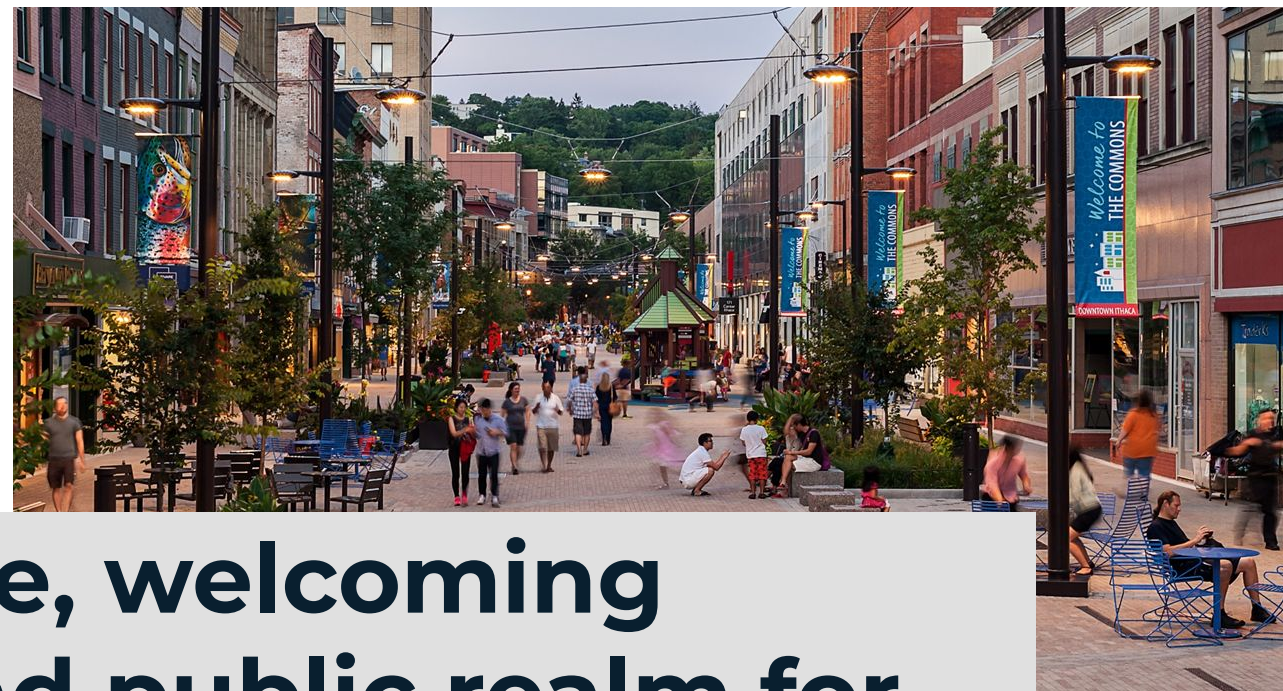
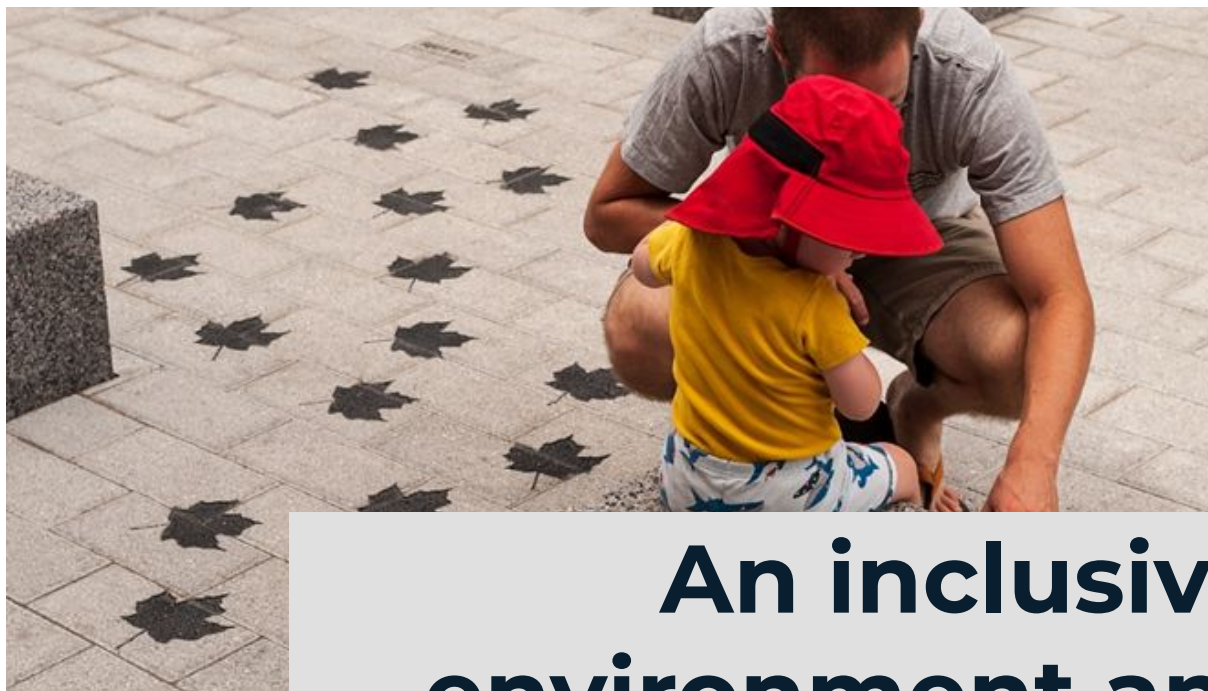


PRECEDENTS

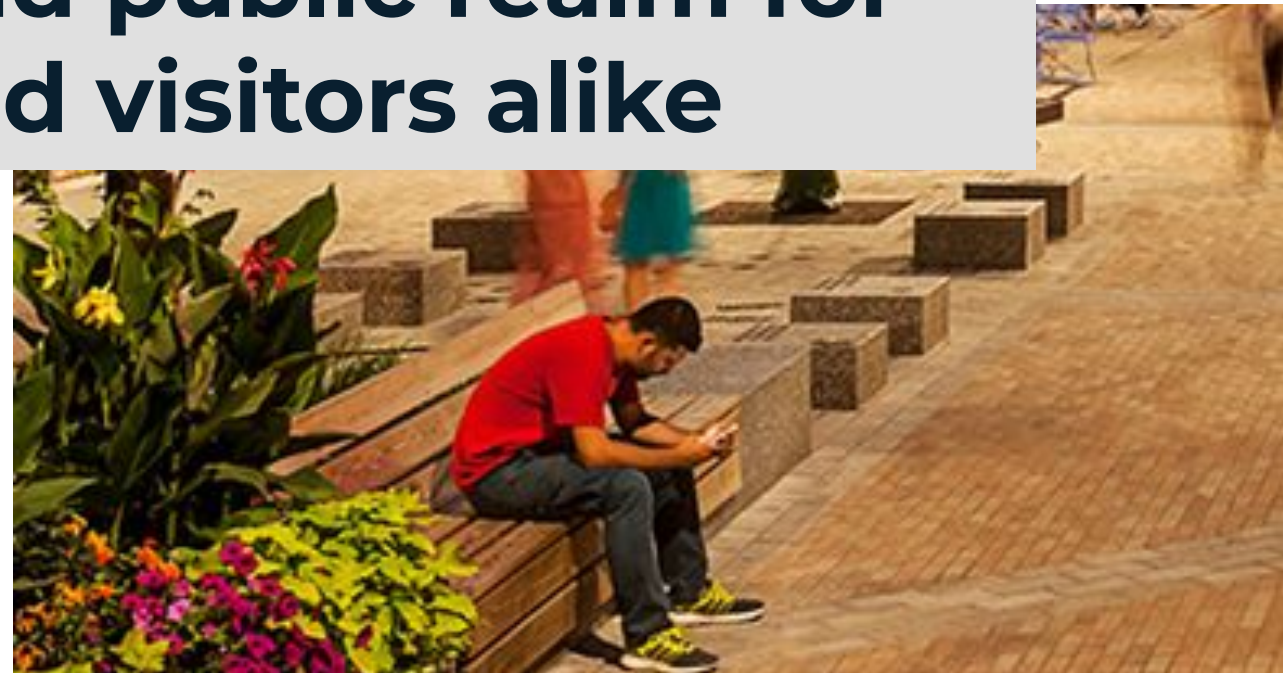
Downtown Crossing can incorporate great ideas from pedestrian streets across the globe

ITHACA COMMONS – Ithaca, NY





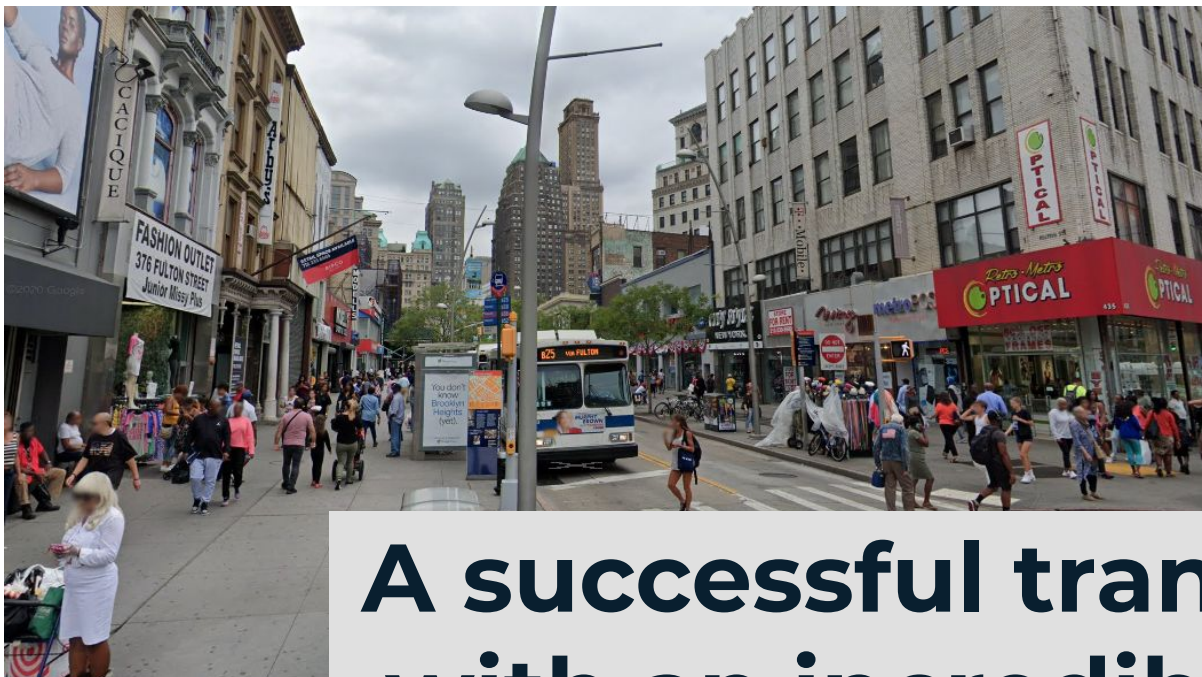
**An inclusive, welcoming
environment and public realm for
residents and visitors alike**



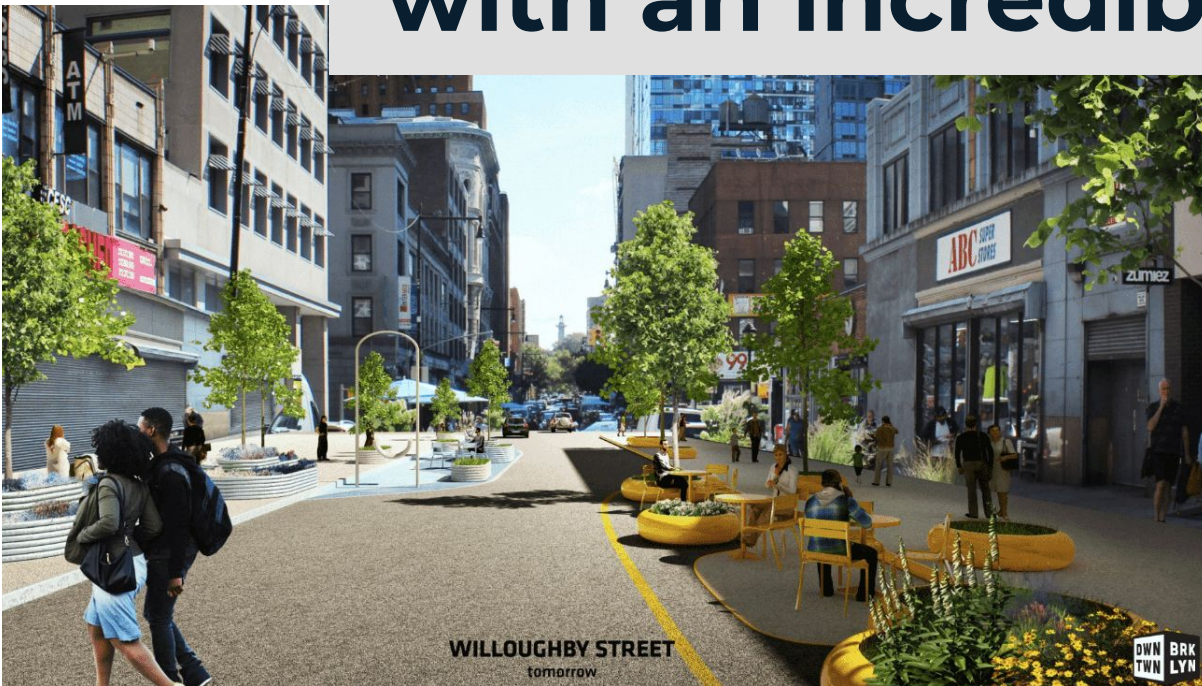


FULTON MALL – Brooklyn, NY





A successful transit/pedestrian mall with an incredible diversity of uses





MARKET SQUARE – Pittsburgh, PA





An inviting shared street around a central gathering space in a historic Downtown







STRØGET – Copenhagen, Denmark



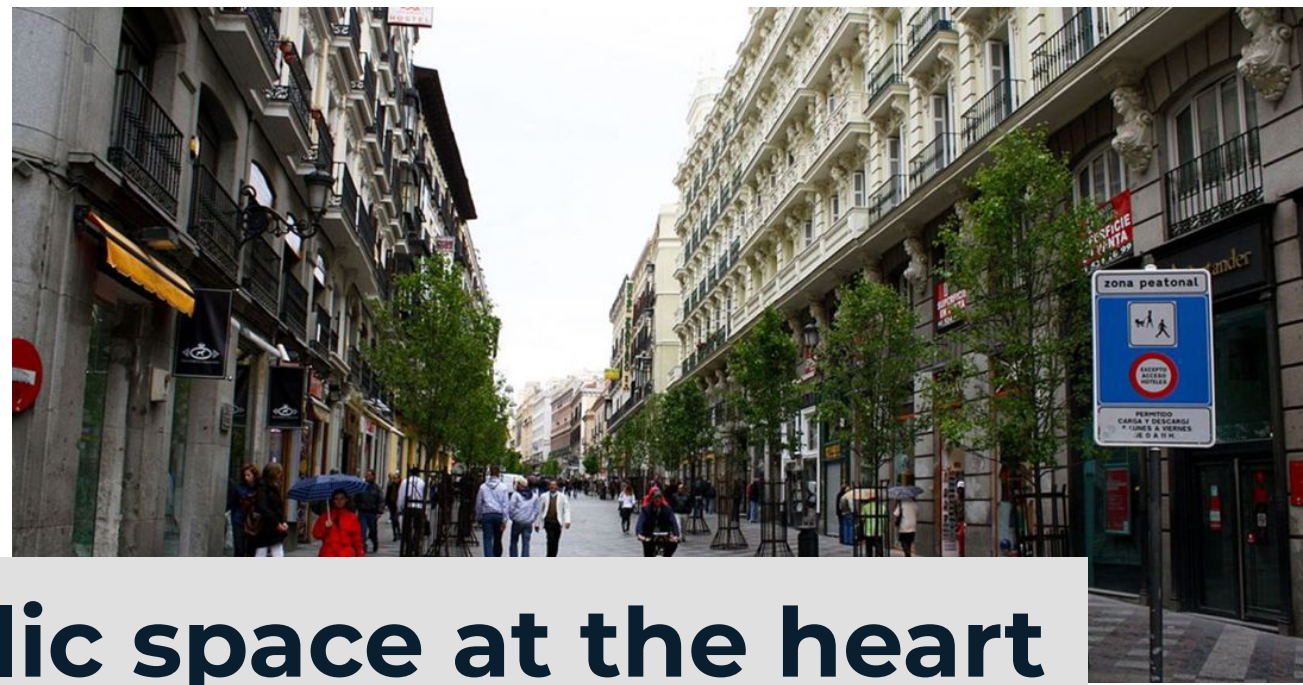
**A world-renowned pedestrian street
with multiple changes in character**







PUERTA DEL SOL – Madrid, Spain



An integrated public space at the heart of the city over a major transit hub







Precedents LivePoll Questions:

1. *What resonates about the case studies shown?*
 - **Respond via chat**
2. *What other great pedestrian streets should our design team look at for inspiration?*
 - **Respond via chat**



NEW POSSIBILITIES

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Winter Street



Bromfield Street



School Street

NEW POSSIBILITIES

- Curbless streets encourage pedestrians to use the full street and reinforce that people walking are the priority



Photo courtesy of The Scope Boston:
<https://thescopeboston.org/692/projects/washington-street-downtown-crossing/>



NEW POSSIBILITIES



- A Shared-Street treatment may be a possibility for portions of School and Bromfield Streets





NEW POSSIBILITIES

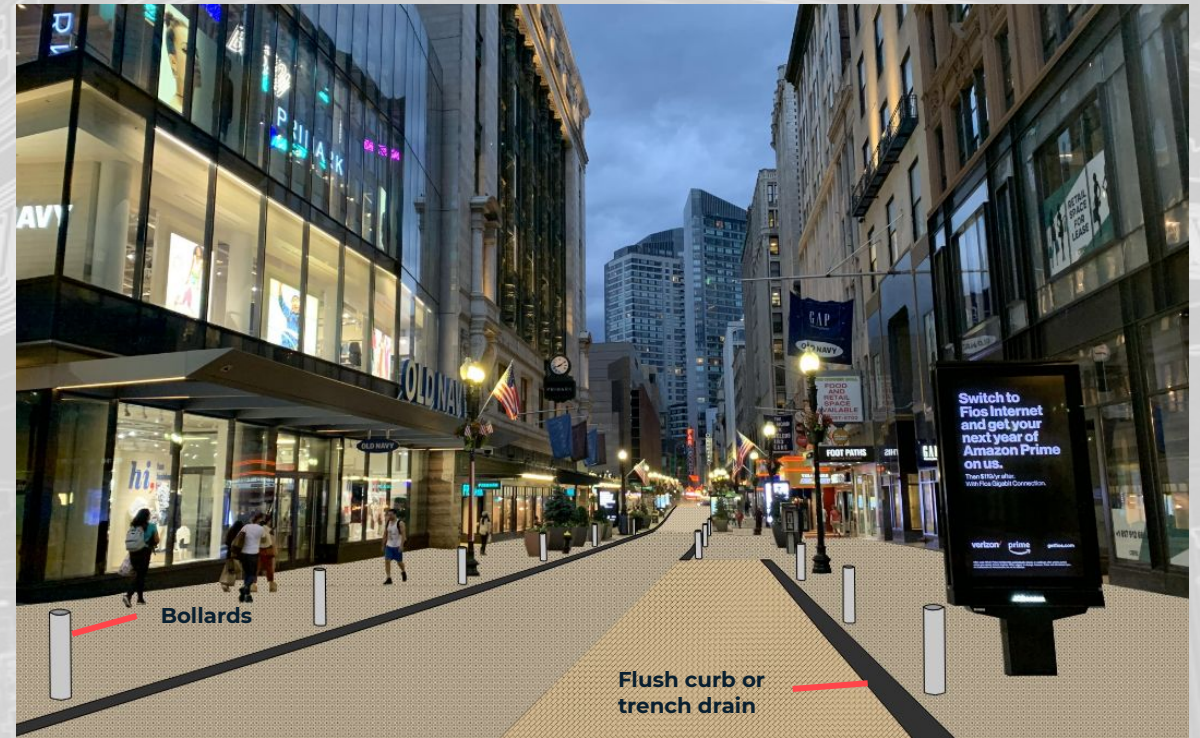
What are some of the possibilities at Downtown Crossing?

WASHINGTON STREET: TODAY



Pedestrians stick to the sidewalks along Washington Street because existing curbs and vehicles make the roadway feel less inviting for people walking

WASHINGTON STREET: FUTURE?



Removing the curbs will encourage pedestrians to use the full width of the roadway and reinforce pedestrian priority. Different paving materials and colors may be considered for different uses, such as loading areas



NEW POSSIBILITIES

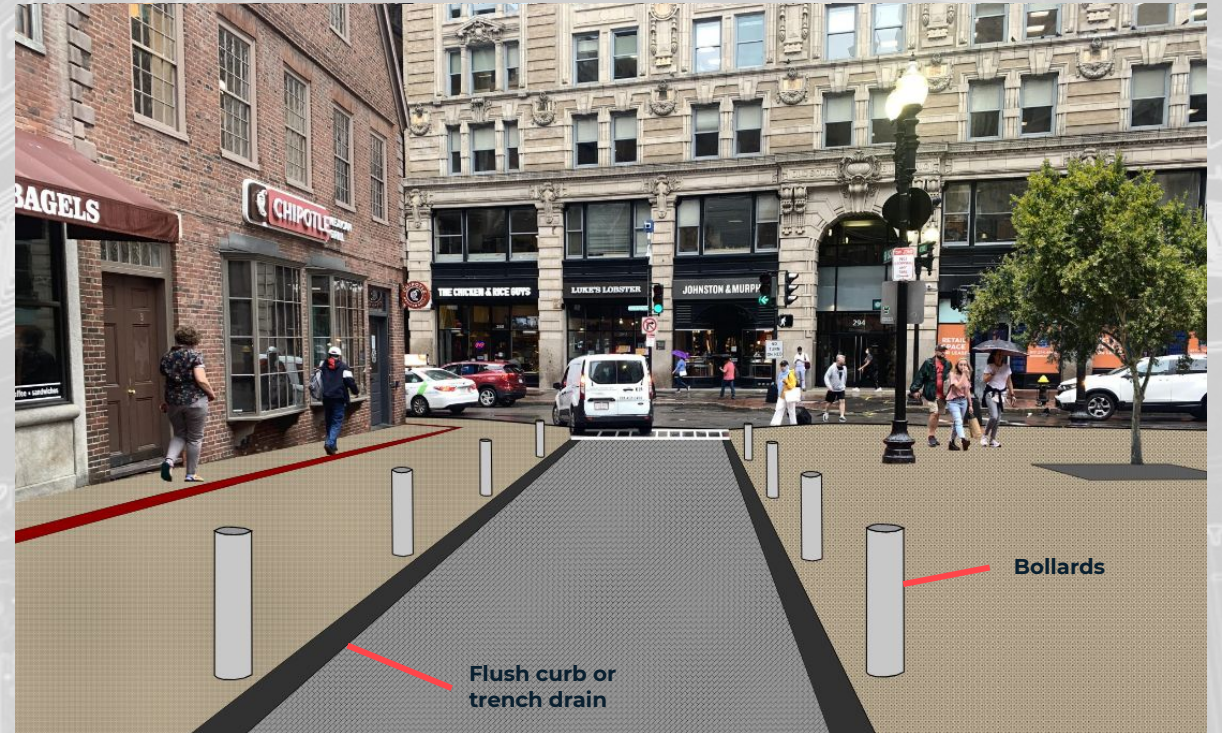
What are some of the possibilities at Downtown Crossing?

SCHOOL STREET: TODAY



Today, motor vehicles have priority along School Street, despite the heavy pedestrian volumes along the Freedom Trail and to/from nearby businesses and attractions

SCHOOL STREET: FUTURE?



A “Shared Street” treatment would prioritize pedestrians by widening sidewalks, removing the curbs and making the street flush with the sidewalks. Bollards or other street furniture can be used to separate cars and people walking

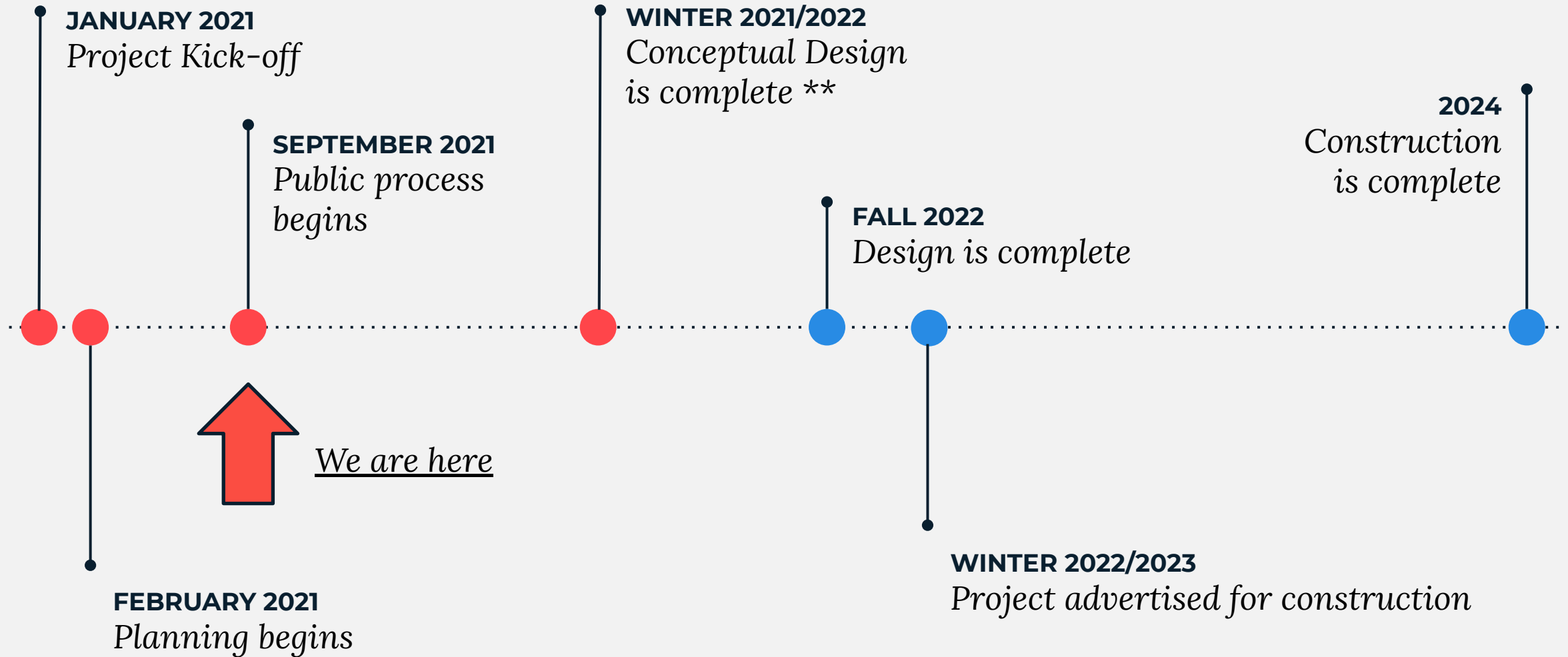


New Possibilities LivePoll Questions:

1. Do you prefer curbed or curbless streets within the pedestrian zone?
 - Curbed
 - Curbless

2. Would you support a Shared-Street treatment for either School or Bromfield Streets?
 - Yes for both
 - Yes for School Street
 - Yes for Bromfield Street
 - No for both

ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE *



* Schedule is anticipated and is subject to change *

** Project is funded through conceptual design phase **

Design – 18 Months

Construction – 24 Months

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Do you have a question?

Please type it in the Chat Box, or raise your hand and the moderator will announce your name and unmute your microphone.

For more information:

PROJECT WEBSITE

boston.gov/downtown-crossing-street-improvements

PROJECT CONTACT

William Moose, Boston Transportation Department
William.Moose@boston.gov
(617) 635-5722